

Amendments to the Abstract:

Please REPLACE the paragraph beginning on page 46, line 1 with the following:

ABSTRACT

A method of manipulating a disc tissue of an intervertebral disc is described, the disc has a nucleus pulposus, an annulus fibrosus, and an inner wall of the annulus fibrosus. The method includes providing a catheter having a radiofrequency electrode at a distal region of the catheter and a proximal region for externally guiding the distal region of the catheter within an intervertebral disc. The method also includes positioning the electrode at the inner wall of the annulus fibrosus by applying a sufficient force to advance the catheter through the nucleus pulposus to the inner wall of the annulus fibrosus. The force is insufficient to puncture the annulus fibrosus. The method further includes delivering energy to the disc tissue using the electrode.